

Co-operatives AUSTRALIA

Minute of teleconference organised by CFNSW, Monday 22 March 2010 10.35 a.m. – 12:01 p.m.

PRESENT: Co-operative Federation of New South Wales (Jim Sneesby and Helen McCall), Jim Howard (Co-operative Federation of Queensland), Co-operative Federation of South Australia (David Osgood and Trevor Schmidt), Co-operatives Victoria (Niel Black and David Griffiths), and Co-operatives WA (Chris Enright and Peter Wells) plus by invitation Trent Bartlett (Deputy Chairman, Co-operatives WA and CEO, Capricorn Society).

It was agreed that David Griffiths would continue in his role as Acting Chairman and Secretary of Co-operatives Australia until further notice.

1. Meeting Notes

Agreed:

That the minutes of CA meeting of 11 September 2009 be accepted as a true and accurate record.

ACTION: Secretary

2. Co-operatives and Social Enterprise

There was discussion on co-operatives and social enterprise, the formation of Social Business Australia (SBA) and the SBA Inaugural Lecture delivered by Dame Pauline Green, President of the International Co-operative Alliance, at Parliament House, Canberra on 15 March 2010.

Trent reported that there had been a meeting with Senator Ursula Stephens, Parliamentary Secretary for Social Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector, and an adviser from the Assistant Treasurer's office to discuss social business and IYC in 2012.

While funding was not guaranteed, the following basic information would be required by Government:

1. What funding was being sought.
2. What funds would be contributed by co-operatives/social businesses.
3. The social impact of co-operatives/social businesses.
4. The benefit to Government of supporting co-operatives/social businesses.

Trent also suggested that States might consider events in 2011 leading up to 2012.

He also suggested that it would be necessary for co-operatives to be seen as part of a broader social business fourth sector in the economy.

It was noted that Pauline Green had also agreed to visit Australia for IYC in 2012.

It was noted that SBA was interested in the formation of a Steering Committee to represent the

interests of social business e.g. co-operatives, credit unions, mutual building societies, friendly societies and employee owned enterprises.

It was noted that the ICA was interested in social business being part of the IYC.

It was noted that there was a need to protect the interests of Co-operatives Australia and how this could be achieved.

It was agreed that Co-operatives Australia would be represented at a meeting convened by Social Business Australia to discuss co-ordination and representation of social businesses including co-operatives and the International Year of Co-operatives.

A report on the meeting would subsequently be considered by the next meeting of Co-operatives Australia.

ACTION: Secretary

3. Business arising from previous meeting

3.1 Legislation Update

It was noted that 20 submissions had been received by NSW Fair Trading on the proposed Co-operatives National Law.

It was agreed that CFNSW would attempt to establish responsiveness to the submissions received.

ACTION: CFNSW

Pending Government assessment of the submissions and proposed amendments in response to the submissions, it was agreed that it would be useful to identify bottom-lines for necessary changes to the proposed Co-operatives National Law. It was agreed that the affected Federations would identify their bottom-lines and circulate these by email before the 29 March 2010 to establish whether there was a consensus on essential changes required.

ACTION: All but WA

There was discussion on the submission received by NSW Fair Trading from the Joint Accounting Bodies (CPA Australia, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia and the National Institute of Accountants) proposing that there should not be separate co-operative legislation and it was agreed that this was unacceptable and that a meeting should be sought to discuss the submission with the Joint Accounting Bodies. It was agreed that CFQ and CFNSW would draft a letter to the Joint Accounting Bodies requesting a meeting and circulate this for approval. The letter would also be provided to NSW Fair Trading.

ACTION: CFQ and CFNSW

Discussion took place on merit of each Federation informing their respective State Minister that the sector was fully supportive of States retaining control over co-operatives law.

ACTION: Federations to action as a State matter.

3.2, Co-operatives Europe

It was noted that **Rainer Schlueter** had resigned as Director of Co-operatives Europe and was an applicant for the position of ICA Director General to replace Ian McDonald.

ACTION: Secretary

3.3, ICA Membership

This issue was deferred for future consideration.

ACTION: Secretary

3.4, Co-operative Education Statement

It was noted that the Co-operative Education statement had been uploaded to australia.coop on the 6 March 2010.

3.5, Demutualisation Paper

The latest draft of the demutualisation paper prepared by Helen McCall and David Griffiths was tabled for consideration.

It was agreed that members would have seven days until 29 March 2010 to enable finalisation of the paper and its uploading to australia coop.

ACTION: Secretary and All

3.6, Top 100

It was noted that CFSA and CWA had provided updated figures and that WA was to provide a revised figure for Ravensdown and that CV and CFNSW were finalising their figures.

It was agreed that the revised list would be finalised in three weeks by 19 April 2010 and, then, published.

ACTION: Secretary and All

3.7, australia.coop

It was noted that the transfer of australia.coop from Co-operatives Victoria to Co-operatives Australia had been accomplished and that work was proceeding on introducing changes suggested by Co-operatives WA and circulated to all Federations.

Co-operatives Victoria invited comment on advertising for the site. It was agreed that advertising by co-operatives, credit unions and mutuals was acceptable and that any proposed advertising would be circulated to the Federations for approval. It was also agreed that income from advertising would be shared between the Federations.

ACTION: Secretary

3.8, University of Sydney

CFNSW advised that the UNSW was interested in another joint/related event and would circulate details when further action is known.

ACTION: Helen McCall

3.9, Co-operative Governance Practices

It was noted that this was still under consideration by Co-operatives WA as an information gathering process when transitioning members to the new WA legislation.

ACTION: Co-operatives WA

4, Other Business

4.1, International Year of Co-operatives

It was agreed to form a working party to consider options for IYC – David Griffiths, Jim Howard and Helen McCall.

ACTION: David Griffiths, Jim Howard and Helen McCall.

4.2, School Co-operatives

It was noted that the Co-operative College CEO and Principal Mervyn Wilson has been involved in the establishment of co-operative schools in the UK and was interested in visiting Australia and discussing this experience. This was noted: and the Secretary agreed to secure further information for circulation and discussion at the next meeting in particular with regard to the applicability of the model and whether or not the co-operative schools in the UK were independent and autonomous of government.

ACTION: Secretary

4.3, Future Chair and Secretary Roles

It was agreed that David Griffiths would continue as Secretary and that the position of Chair would be reviewed at the next meeting with David Griffiths continuing as Acting/Chair.

ACTION: Secretary

4.4, Reports from Federations

CFSA advised that the Master Butchers Co-operative Ltd (MBL) in South Australia had received \$500,000 under the Re-tooling for Climate Change program following an amendment to the programme guidelines to include co-operatives.

5, Next Meeting and Hosting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be a teleconference on 31 May 2010 at the latest and funded by Co-operatives Victoria.

It was also confirmed that the next face-to-face meeting would be 14 October 2010 in S.A to coincide with the Co-operatives South Australia annual conference on 15 October 2010.

David Griffiths
Secretary
24 March 2010